



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

This is all the information which, after long and diligent research, I have been ~~been~~ able to obtain concerning Robert Talbot, the founder of the ancient mural defences of Kilkenny. I feel convinced that the subject must have interest for the Society, and that if I have not fully accounted for the motives which led a private individual to such a weighty undertaking, and that I have in so far left the matter involved in as much mystery as ever; I think I have at least brought forward sufficient circumstantial evidence to corroborate the statements of some of the old annalists, and expose the fallacy of Dr. Ledwich's theory that Kilkenny was walled by a Richard Talbot, whose only connexion with the place was, that his father was married to a sister of the Earl Ormonde—no proof, surely, that he himself ever saw our town? My own opinion still is—but I merely gave it as a surmise—that Robert Talbot only advanced the means of building the walls on the security of the murage-tolls which many royal charters had vested in the burgesses, and that Dowling hazarded the supposition (somewhat on the Ledwich principle,) of the works being carried out at his private expense from reading the laudations heaped upon the “worthie gentleman” by previous chroniclers who had not been sufficiently explicit as to his motives and inducements to the undertaking. In conclusion, I may observe that it appears from some inquisitions of the seventeenth century, that the ancient bastion or flanker of the city wall in the garden of our esteemed fellow citizen, P. Watters, Esq., Town Clerk of Kilkenny, was at that time termed “Talbot's Castle,” a name which it no doubt derived from the “worthie gentleman” of whose “well-judged liberality” it is now almost the only remaining witness.

ANCIENT FLEMISH COLONY IN KILKENNY.

BY JOHN G. A. PRIM.

[*Read at the Meeting of July 4th.*]

As the illustration of local history is one of the main objects of the Archæological Society, I beg to lay before the members some information connected with ancient Kilkenny, which I trust will not be considered altogether unimportant or uninteresting. It is pretty generally known, for it is matter of historical notoriety, that towards the end of the sixteenth century a colony of Flemish mechanics, skilful in the working of fine manufactures and embroidery, was established in Kil-

kenny. Carte, in noticing Peter the eighth Earl of Ormonde, and his celebrated Countess, Margaret of Kildare, mentions of them that "they brought out of Flanders, artificers whom they employed at Kilkenny in making tapestry, diaper, Turkey carpets, cushions, &c." whilst Sir James Ware states that Earl Peter, by the advice of his lady, "hired and placed (in Kilkenny) the Polymitary, and other skilful artificers, out of Flanders, and other countries beyond seas;" and there can be little doubt that most of the very curious and beautiful tapestry which adorned the Castle of Kilkenny before the recent re-edification, and which now lies in a lumber room over the Castle stables, was the work of those ingenious foreigners. But it is not known, and therefore it may be interesting to the people of Kilkenny to be informed of the fact, that a settlement of Flemish artificers took place here at a much earlier period—in fact, not long after the English invasion—and that they inhabited a suburb of the town separately walled, and defended with gates and towers, and actually called from them "Flemingstown," or "the town of the Flemings."

Some time since the Rev. James Graves, in making some researches amongst old documents in the office of the Registrar of the Diocese of Ossory, chanced to light upon an ancient parchment roll, containing an account or rental of the property of the Corporation of Kilkenny, and the sums paid by their tenants for their various holdings, and which document bore date the fifth year of King Henry V. One of the denominations from which the Corporation received a considerable income was set down in the roll as "Fleming's towne," and not being aware of any such locality in Kilkenny, the Rev. gentleman consulted me on the subject; but I, too, was then equally ignorant as to the whereabouts of the place. However, we set about an inquiry into the matter; but for a long time all the additional information which we could obtain was, that in the "Liber Primus," or most early book of record at present in the possession of the Corporation, the same place is referred to in an account of the revenue of the civic body, dated in the twenty-seventh year of Henry VI. where it is indifferently denominated "Flemynstown" and "Flemyn's-street." At length the mystery was entirely and most satisfactorily solved by a manuscript in the British Museum (Cod. Clarend. tom. LI. No. 4796) never published. It appears to be the commencement of a history of the Diocese of Ossory and City of Kilkenny, written about the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is in Latin; the author's name unknown, and it breaks off abruptly in the midst of a description of the Cathedral. The writer, after noticing the fact that the original inhabitants of Kilkenny consisted of two distinct nations, having separate though closely contiguous settlements, called from each people, respectively, "the English town," and "the Irish town," goes on to state that shortly after, a third settlement was added to these, being that of "a colony of Flemings; who, as it appears, consisted chiefly of artificers and

traders, but more especially of fullers, cooks, brewers, and those engaged in weaving linen and woollen fabrics." This colony of foreigners, he informs us, was invited over for the advancement of the arts and the improvement of the trade of the town by the early inhabitants, who located them in the neighbourhood of the castle "in order that they might be defended from the attacks of plunderers and robbers;" and there the strangers "securely fortified their village, whence that locality was afterwards called the town of the Flemings or Flemingstown, as appears by many ancient records: and that town, or street of the Flemings, till very lately retained its appellation, although being long uninhabited;"—the author even intimates that it had so been called in his own memory. The cause of the breaking up of the settlement, he asserts, was that the descendants of the foreigners were removed to the Manor of Dunfert (Danesfort) by the Earls of Ormonde, for the purpose of cultivating the land, when they gave up their former pursuits, and entirely turned their attention to agricultural affairs. He says that from the extent of the pavement and other remains existing in his time, the town or street of the Flemings must have been a settlement of some size and importance; but he remarks of the pavement that "it is now broken up and divided by ditches and hedges to keep off the wild beasts from the cultivated ground and gardens there situate."

It would be interesting to fix the exact period at which the Flemish settlement was made at Kilkenny, but this I am not at present prepared to attempt. However the earliest document that I have yet been able to discover, which makes mention of it, is a deed of the 13th Edward III. (1339) preserved in the Evidence Chamber of Kilkenny Castle, and which recites a grant from Henry Sampson to Walter de Ely, of one messuage with its appurtenances in the town of the Flemings, Kilkenny (*in villa Flamingorum Kilkennie*), which formerly belonged to Sabina Godale, and held of the lords in chief of that fee, by the usual services. The witnesses to the document were John Cros, Sovereign; and Richard Mertowne and John Lyonns, Provosts of the Town. Thus we have this foreign Colony established in Kilkenny, at all events before the reign of Edward III., and we have also evidence that it must have been again removed from the neighbourhood before that of Henry V. (1413), for in the Corporation rent-roll of the latter period in the Diocesan Registrar's office, already alluded to, scarcely any houses are set down as making a return to the Town income from the locality, but no less than forty-five gardens and orchards are charged, as being held by tenants in the Flemingstown.

We are not left in doubt as to the exact site of the Flemish settlement. We have already seen that it was in the neighbourhood of the Castle, and the author of the Clarendon MS. further states the precise position of the gate of their village, which was nearest to the walls of the Englishtown of Kilkenny, and which gate was taken down in his

own memory, and re-erected in the City, by the water's edge, at New-quay. This gate, he mentions, originally was built by the Flemings "on the high ground opposite the three water mills belonging to the Lord of Kilkenny." The mills of the feudal lord of Kilkenny were situate on the site of the present factory of Messrs. K. Scott and Co. still known by the name of "Ormonde Mills;" and it is therefore easy to understand that the gate in question stood where Switzer's Asylum has been since erected; whilst it is natural to suppose that the street of the Flemish village ran along towards the Black-quarry, being—in fact—anciently, as now, the approach to the city from the Thomastown direction. The portion of the present suburb, where the ancient settlement of the foreigners was located, is at this day, and has for a considerable period, been known by the name of "Archer's-street," an appellation which it probably received (after the emigration of the Flemings) from a mansion of the Archer family there situate, and which must have been a building of importance, as in 1417 William Archer jun. paid for it to the Corporation the very high rent (considering the period) of 5s. 2d. per annum—one of the largest rents chargeable for any tenement under the Corporation, according to the rent-roll of the 5th Henry V.

But though the existence of the ancient Flemish colony is altogether forgotten and overlooked in the modern English name of the locality, I am inclined to think that some allusion to that interesting circumstance may still be traced in its well-known Irish appellation of *Sraid-na-m-bodach*—literally, "the street of the churls." We can very well understand that the phlegmatic and plodding Dutch mechanics should be looked down upon, and their devotion to trade and industry contemptuously regarded, by the military retainers of the neighbouring castle, as well as the more mercurial and less pains-taking burghers of the adjoining English and Irish towns of Kilkenny; and it can therefore be readily conceived that the settlement of the foreign artificers, amongst the upper classes termed the street of the Flemings, was contemptuously designated by the vulgar and ignorant, by the name which it still retains (though the cause of the appellation has never been canvassed or speculated upon) of *Sraid-na-m-bodach*, or the street of the churls.